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1995/08/00

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BOSNIA: UN ISSUES

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OBJECTIVES:

- o To affirm our commitment to the continuance of the humanitarian mission of the United Nations in Bosnia.
 - o To affirm our resolve to bolster UN mandates and deter attacks against UN safe areas.

BACKGROUND:

- o We support the right of the Republic of Bosnia- Herzegovina to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity and we have strong humanitarian interests in preventing civilian casualties and human rights abuses in the region.
 - o We believe UNPROFOR must remain in Bosnia because its presence has made a significant contribution to the welfare of the Bosnian people and we believe UNPROFOR withdrawal would lead to an even worse humanitarian disaster. However, we must provide UNPROFOR with the means to better accomplish its mandate.
 - o The United States and its allies have taken the lead in developing a new strategy to bolster UN mandates and deter Bosnian Serb attacks on UN-designated safe areas. NATO agreements ratified this new approach by threatening to meet any assault on UN safe areas with a substantial and decisive air attack.
 - o The UN Secretary General supported these decisions by agreeing to new command and control arrangements in order to ensure a streamlined and significant response to Serb provocations.
 - o The UN Security Council has reinforced UNPROFOR with a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) in order to reduce the vulnerability of its personnel and enhance its capacity to carry out UNPROFOR's existing mandate. The RRF is also being used in support UNPROFOR, notably in its efforts to end the siege of Sarajevo.
 - o President Clinton has decided to provide U.S. logistics and equipment to support our European allies who will man the RRF in Bosnia. It is our belief, however, that the bulk of funding for the RRF should come through voluntary contributions at the UN.
 - o The U.S. will continue to participate in NATO operations to enforce the no-fly zone and to provide close air support to protect UNPROFOR.

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- o If it ultimately proves necessary to withdraw UNPROFOR, the President is committed, in principle, to provide additional U.S. support, including the use of ground forces, to a NATO-led operation, which was provisionally approved at NATO on June 28. We also remain prepared to help to contribute troops to the implementation of a final peace settlement.
- o We have always felt the UN arms embargo unfairly penalizes the Bosnian Government, which is the victim of Serb aggression. We continue to push for multilateral lifting of the embargo.
- o We firmly oppose Congress' efforts to break the arms embargo unilaterally because it would prompt UNPROFOR withdrawal, leading to a wider and bloodier conflict for which the U.S. would have ultimate responsibility.
- o Unilateral lift would violate international law and would undermine other UN resolutions and sanctions that serve critical U.S. interests. The President has vetoed the bill and he expects that the veto will be sustained.

KEY POINTS:

- o To reiterate our support for UNPROFOR's continued presence and the international community's heightened resolution to bolster UN mandates.
 - Threatening to respond to Serb assaults against UN safe areas with a substantial and decisive air campaign.
 - Providing logistical support for the RRF and participating in NATO operations to enforce the no-fly zone and provide close air support for UNPROFOR.

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PLW/HB 7-05-88

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